

1. (Currently Amended) A pool cover system, comprising:
 - a storage reel having a central mandrel that extends along a central axis;
 - a pool cover having an edge;
 - ~~at least one rigid plate~~ a plurality of rigid plates coupled to said edge of said pool cover, ~~wherein each of said rigid plates are at least one foot long and linearly aligned along said edge, and wherein a space exists between each of said rigid plates that allows said pool cover to be folded across said edge in between said rigid plates.;~~
 - a first set of mechanical fasteners disposed between said ~~at least one rigid plate~~ rigid plates and said central mandrel that selectively interconnect said ~~at least one rigid plate~~ rigid plates to said central mandrel in an orientation parallel to said central axis.
2. (Currently Amended) The system according to Claim 1, wherein said ~~at least one rigid plate is~~ rigid plates are selectively detachable from said pool cover.
3. (Cancelled)
4. (Cancelled)
5. (Currently Amended) The system according to Claim ~~1~~ 1, further including a second set of mechanical fasteners for selectively interconnecting said edge

of said pool cover to said rigid plates ~~at least one rigid plate~~.

6. (Original) The system according to Claim 5, wherein said first set of mechanical fasteners and said second set of mechanical fasteners are the same type of fastener.

7. (Original) The system according to Claim 6, wherein said first set of mechanical fasteners is selected from a group consisting of snap connectors, hook connectors, hook and loop fasteners, and clevis fasteners.

8. (Currently Amended) A method of improving the interconnection between a pool cover and a storage reel having a linear axis of rotation, said method comprising the steps of:

connecting ~~at least one rigid plate~~ a plurality of rigid plates along an edge of said pool cover, ~~wherein each of said rigid plates is linearly aligned along said edge and a space exists between each of said rigid plates that allows said pool cover to be folded along said edge in between said rigid plates;~~ and

providing at least one connector on said storage reel that selectively engages and retains said ~~at least one rigid plate~~ rigid plates in an orientation parallel to said axis of rotation.

9. (Cancelled)

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 8, wherein said step of connecting ~~at least one rigid plate~~ a plurality of rigid plates along an edge of said pool cover includes selectively attaching said ~~at least one rigid plate~~ plurality of rigid plates to the edge of the pool cover with detachable mechanical fasteners.

12. (Original) The method according to Claim 8, wherein said step of providing at least one connector on said storage reel includes mounting mechanical connectors to the storage reel.

13. (Currently Amended) A system for retroactively altering a pool cover and a pool cover storage reel to improve the ability of the pool cover to be evenly wound about the storage reel, said system including:

~~at least one rigid plate~~ a plurality of rigid plates;

a first set of fasteners for selectively attaching said ~~at least one rigid plate~~ rigid plates to an edge of said pool cover, ~~wherein said rigid plates attach linearly along said edge and leave spaces along said edge in between said rigid plates that enable said pool cover to be folded along said edge at said spaces;~~ and

a second set of fasteners for selectively attaching said ~~at least one rigid plate~~ rigid plates to said storage reel.

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Currently Amended) The system according to Claim ~~14~~ 13, wherein said first set of fasteners are selected from a group consisting of snap connectors, hook connectors, and hoop and loop connectors.